

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 00378 151842Z

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 151740Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8662

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 0378

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINT PFOR PINR EC

SUBJECT: SUPREME COUNCIL MEMBERS DISAVOW ANY ADHERENCE TO  
EXTREMISM

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED:

1. DURING A MEETING ON JAN. 14 WITH DIRECTORS OF NEWS MEDIA REGARDING SUPREME COUNCIL RESTRICTIONS ON DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION, THE MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL DISAVOWED ANY TENDENCIES TO EXTREMISM AND A RESPECT FOR ALL POINTS OF VIEW. THE COUNCIL AGAIN PROMISED A RAPID REMOVAL OF NEWS CENSORSHIP.

2. GENERAL GUILLERMO DURAN ARCENTALES, COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE ARMY, REFERRED TO CHARGES THAT HE WAS A COMMUNIST SYMPATHIZER, OBVIOUSLY REFERRING TO STATEMENTS MADE BY FORMER MINISTER OF EDUCATION GENERAL GUSTAVO VASCONEZ IN THE DAYS PRIOR TO THE CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT, AND DENIED CATEGORICALLY ANY SUCH INCLINATION. HE STATED THAT HIS CATHOLIC RELIGION DID NOT PERMIT HIS ADHERENCE TO ANY FORM OF EXTREMISM. SIMILAR PRONOUNCEMENTS WERE MADE BY PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL, VICE ADMIRAL ALFREDO POVEDA, AND BY BRIGADIER GENERAL LUIS LEORO, COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE AIR FORCE.

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PAGE 02 QUITO 00378 151842Z

3. COMMENT: THERE HAS BEEN CONCERN IN SOME SECTORS REGARDING THE POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF THE NEW SUPREME

COUNCIL, AND ESPECIALLY OF GENERAL DURAN. STATEMENTS MADE BY MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL WERE CLEARLY AIMED AT REASSURING THE PUBLIC. MISSION HAS NO INFORMATION TO INDICATE THAT EITHER ADMIRAL POVEDA OR GENERAL LEORO HAVE SYMPATHIES FOR OR INCLINATIONS TOWARD THE LEFT. GENERAL DURAN HAS ALWAYS BEEN REGARDED AS A CONSERVATIVE UNTIL THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT WHEN THERE WERE REPORTS OF HIS MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND ALLEGATIONS THAT HE WAS A COMMUNIST. PEOPLE WHO KNOW DURAN WELL DISCLAIM SUCH CHARGES AND SAY THAT THEY WERE BEGUN BY HIS RIVALS FOR POWER. IT MAY BE THAT DURAN WAS ENDEAVORING TO USE LEFTISTS AND THEY HIM IN THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER THAT WAS ENSUING. BASED ON THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE, EMBASSY'S BEST JUDGMENT IS THAT DURAN'S STATEMENT OF JAN. 14 CAN BE ACCEPTED AT FACE VALUE, BUT WE DO NOT PRECLUDE THAT HIS OPPORTUNISM AND NATIONALISM COULD DISPOSE HIM TO COOPERATE WITH, OR PERHAPS BE USED, BY LEFTISTS. POVEDA AND DURAN WILL PROBABLY ALSO CONTINUE RODRIGUEZ LARA POLICY OF NOT REJECTING MOSCOW LINE COMMUNIST PARTY SUPPORT. END COMMENT. HEMENWAY

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